

White horses in the Tay which was anything but silvery

Ian Campbell made his debut for Scotland in the Home Nations Shore Angling Championship on Tayside, and it was tough going for the angler who organises the popular Edinburgh Winter Shore Angling series.

Scotland's weather Gods threw everything they could at the lady, youth and senior competitors casting a line. It was tough for Campbell and the rest on a beach on Day One and also on Day Two at the Tay Estuary in Dundee.

The silvery Tay was anything but on Thursday. It was a dirty shade of brown.

The anglers, tucked away on the graffiti-walled walkway, behind the University of Dundee playing fields, adjacent to the city's airport, also had to endure sharp showers.

There was no real shelter as the fierce wind whistled down the river valley. White horses featured prominently on the water, driven by the west wind which was unrelenting.

Campbell (pictured looking for tackle), like most anglers, sat with their backs to the blast, huddled as close as they could to the concrete banking, some creating makeshift shelters.

Seaweed, swept up by the strong tide, became a real pest for

the competitors as the wind increased in ferocity as the match moved into the afternoon session. The glum faces bankside summed it up. This was an endurance test and far from being an enjoyable festival of fishing.

Remember, this is officially summer and the first week in July. Not the weather VisitScotland would wish to help promote Scotland as a tourism and sporting venue for holidaymakers from near and far.

However, sea anglers are a stubborn bunch and they toughed it out. Scotland men, represented by three members of the East Fife Shore Angling Club, Kirkcaldy-based Chris Horn, the team captain, Campbell from Falkirk and Dundonian, David Cargill, were defending the gold medal the Tartan Team won on Welsh beaches 12 months ago.

The ladies team won silver last year, deprived of a gold medal in the final minutes of the two-day event, and the junior side took bronze in 2023. They were hopeful of moving up the pile. Did they succeed? Well, we'll not know the answer to that question until the official results are confirmed, probably first thing on Friday.

Kirkcaldy-based Mike Horn, president of the Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers, and father of the team captain, said fishing had been tough on Day One when the men fished Elliot Beach near Arbroath.

It was also difficult on Day Two and most of the fish landed were small flounder and dabs, carefully scrutinised and measured by the orange- and yellow-vested stewards who lined the bank.

For the record, the fish were quickly returned to the sea as the anglers signed for the catch and moved on, hoping to hook more, by attaching another carefully-tied rig with bait supplied of peeler crab, black lugworm and mackerel, to their line before launching it out into the sea with a heavy grip

lead, hoping that its prongs would attach to the sea bottom.

One angler, trying to keep the wind off with a heavy jacket and his face almost hidden behind a hoodie to keep out the wind, quipped: "We didn't expect this and the conditions were totally different from the practice days."

PICTURE: Ian Campbell, retail manager of the Edinburgh Angling Centre, on the banks of the Tay on Day two of the Home Nations in one of the sunny spells between the showers. Picture by ***Nigel Duncan***





MEASURE: Officials checking the length of a catch by an England team member. Picture by **Nigel Duncan**



EVERY CENTIMETRE COUNTS: Stewards checking another landing.

Picture by *Nigel Duncan*



PLAYING A WAITING GAME: Ciaran Peck from Stornoway watching his rod tip for a sign of a bit on Tayside. Picture *Nigel Duncan*



STUDY IN CONCENTRATION: Scotland captain Chris Horn changing bait during the Home Nations. Picture ***Nigel Duncan***